

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5141  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 1089

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, BM  
SUBJ: GUB REPORT ON BATTLES WITH BCP

RER: (A) RANGOON 1058 (NOTAL) , (B) 77 RANGOON 3415

1. ON MARCH 27 (RESISTANCE DAY), THE GUB PUBLISHED A BRIEF REPORT OF FIGHTING IN THE NOTHERN SHAN STATE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT FORCES AND THE BURMA COMMUNIST PARTY (BCP) OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS. ACCORDING TO THIS REPORT, MORE THAN 800 BCP INSURGENTS WERE KILLED DURING THIS PERIOD (335 BODIES RECOVERED), WHILE GOVERNMENT LOSSES WERE PUT AT 135 KILLED, 124 MISSING AND 229 WOUNDED. NO BCP WERE REPORTED WOUNDED OR TAKEN PRISONER.

2. THE REPORT COVERS OPERATIONS IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1978, NEAR THE SALWEEN RIVER BETWEEN THE KUNLONG AND TANG-YAN AREAS OF THE NORTHEASTERN SHAN STATE OF BURMA. THE FIGHTING BEGAN ON FEBRUARY 2 WITH AN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE BURMA ARMY AND SOME 1,300 BCP TROOPS, WHO HAD INFILTRATED INTO AREAS NORTHEAST OF KUNLONG. THIS BATTLE LASTED FOR TEN DAYS, AFTER WHICH THE REMNANTS OF THE BCP FORCE MOVED SOUTHWARDS. IN THIS ENGAGEMENT, BCP LOSSES WERE LISTED AT OVER 100 DEAD VS. 41 FOR THE BURMA ARMY. THIS CLASH WAS FOLLOWED ON FEBRUARY 11 BY ANOTHER FIGHT BETWEEN 600 BCP AND AN UNREPORTED NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT  
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TROOPS WEST OF THE SALWEEN RIVER NEAR KUNLONG. THE BCP LOST 207 IN THIS ENCOUNTER AS COMPARED TO FOUR FOR THE BURMA ARMY. A THIRD SERIES OF BATTLES, INVOLVING A COMMUNIST FORCE OF UNDETERMINED SIZE, SAID TO INCLUDE THOSE WHO FLED AFTER THE FIRST ENGAGEMENT, TOOK PLACE FARTHER SOUTH IN THE TANG-YAN AREA WEST OF THE SALWEEN RIVER MARCH 7 TO 25. THIS RESULTED IN OVER 500 COMMUNIST DEATHS, WHILE THE BURMA ARMY

LOST SOME 90 MEN.

3. EVEN ALLOWING FOR THE POSSIBILITY THE GOVERNMENT ESTIMATE OF BCP LOSSES MAY BE EXCESSIVE, THIS LATEST SERIES OF ENGAGEMENTS, TAKEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MAJOR BCP OFFENSIVE OF LAST OCTOBER WHEN THE GOVERNMENT CLAIMED OVER 500 BCP KILLED IN ACTION (SEE REF. B), INDICATES FIGHTING OF A SCALE AND INTENSITY SO FAR THIS DRY SEASON THAT CLEARLY EXCEEDS THAT OF PREVIOUS YEARS. THE FIGHTING HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL ON BOTH SIDES, BUT THE OVERALL POSITION OF GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNIST FORCES REMAINS ROUGHLY THE SAME AS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEASON, WITH THE SALWEEN RIVER FORMING AN UNOFFICIAL BOUNDARY BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND BCP HELD TERRITORIES IN THE N.E. SHAN STATE. MORE COMPREHENSIVE EMBASSY ASSESSMENT WILL FOLLOW.  
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## Message Attributes

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